

IN THE CLAIMS:

As shown in Appendix C, please amend **Claims 1, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 21, and 23** to read as follows:

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1. (Amended) An apparatus for facilitating the recording of data, comprising:
an optical source;
a metallic structure that receives optical radiation from the optical source and emits optical output from an emission region in said structure, said structure having an array of features that couple the radiation to at least one surface plasmon mode of said structure to increase the emitted optical output from said emission region beyond what the emitted optical output from said emission region would be in the absence of said features, wherein the emitted optical output includes a near-field portion that extends from said emission region out to a distance less than the average wavelength of the emitted optical output; and
at least one element secured to said metallic structure, said at least one element generating magnetic fields whose strength is sufficient to write data in a data recording medium located within the near-field portion.

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8. (Amended) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said metallic structure includes metal selected from the group consisting of Au, Ag, Cu, Al, and Cr.

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10. (Amended) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the spacing between said features in said metallic structure is chosen to enhance the optical output from said emission region at at least one predetermined wavelength.

11. (Amended) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said array includes recessed areas within said metallic structure.

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12. (Amended) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the spacing between said features in said metallic structure is periodic.

13. (Amended) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said metallic structure is joined to at least one dielectric layer.

14. (Amended) The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein said aperture is a slit.

16. (Amended) The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein said aperture has a width at its narrowest point of about 10-100 nanometers.

21. (Amended) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the optical radiation has a frequency that matches a resonant frequency of said structure.

23. (Amended) A method of directing electromagnetic radiation onto a data recording medium, comprising:

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providing a metal structure having an array of features;
directing optical radiation onto the array of features to generate at least one surface plasmon mode, thereby enhancing the optical output emanating from an emission region in the metal structure; and
directing the optical output from the emission region onto a recording medium to facilitate the recording of data.

REMARKS

Minor changes in wording have been made in several of the claims to improve their readability and to correct antecedent problems.